UNITED NATIONS

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United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Distr.
LIMITED

TD/L.352
1 May 1996

ENGLISH
Original: ENGLISH

Ninth session
Midrand, 27 April 1996

ADDRESS BY MR. ALEC ERWIN, MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY OF SOUTH AFRICA AND PRESIDENT OF THE NINTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

I have already thanked the member States of UNCTAD for the honour they have bestowed on my country by electing South Africa to the Presidency.

It is not an easy task that has been given to the Presidency. This is more particularly the case because, in the documentation I have read and in the deliberations I have heard so far, I have a real sense that UNCTAD stands poised - it can slip back or move decisively forward. There are many organizations in this world that exist simply because they exist. Their *raison d'être* is submerged in their institutional history. The complexity of their daily functioning and of the world within which they operate leads to inertia. This Conference must not allow UNCTAD to walk down that path; if it does it will cease to exist in the foreseeable future. There are many reasons why this could happen.

The changes in the global economy and the urgency with which development must be addressed will not tolerate complacency. Successful organizations are those whose members want them to exist and work to keep them changing as circumstances change. Members do not accommodate themselves to the organization's existence, they work to ensure that the organization accommodates their needs and aspirations.

I believe that UNCTAD stands poised with the potential to move in this, more positive, direction. South Africa assumes the Presidency in the firm belief that we must create in UNCTAD an organization whose participants want concrete outcomes. We cannot fail in this task. If we do, it will be a real blow to the prospects for development.

As newcomers to UNCTAD, we South Africans want to assist the process of reinvigorating the organization. Not so long ago we ourselves were faced with the horrifying prospect of failure. It may sound somewhat polemical, even dramatic, to compare the prospect South Africa faced two years ago with the apparently more measured and diplomatic choices that confront UNCTAD at this Conference. But delaying development for two billion marginalized people is to us a horrifying prospect.

I, personally, was heartened by the sense of passion conveyed by the Heads of State who addressed the enormity of the poverty problem in the Ministerial Round Table. If UNCTAD does have an important role to play in trade and development - as I believe it has - then to eliminate that role by failing to mobilize our energies during this Conference would be a great indictment on all of us.

I believe, if we are frank with ourselves, that this Conference will have to be seen to have conducted itself differently - it must exhibit a vigour, a sense of urgency and purpose and a new desire for efficiency. This will engender a confidence and momentum sorely needed in our world today.

It would seem to me that UNCTAD must look beyond its institutional history and re-examine its rationale and precise location in a changing world economy. One theme of this Conference is partnership. But what does that mean in practice. To me it means a clear definition of each other's role and function, a clear understanding of the reasons for forming the partnership and a definition of common work towards common objectives. Of course, there need to be good working relationships if the partnership is to be a good one. This Conference must, therefore, explore these notions of partnership in relation to other multilateral agencies, intergovernmental relations and institutions, the civil society and NGOs, and the private business sector.

We have to guard against complacency; we must be pro-active and innovative, and in doing so point to concrete roles which UNCTAD will play. Where it will render technical and operational assistance, these services must be driven by the need to solve problems, answer difficult questions and create new possibilities.

We have had a great start to this ninth Conference. The openness and frankness of the Heads of State and of the Agencies must point the way. As the individual charged with the Presidency, I call on all delegates to:

- Speak your minds in the Round Tables - let us address issues and seek solutions. We need fresh minds and fresh ideas;

- Be economical with words and formal courtesies;

- Work to solve the perennial problems - do not create new ones.

With your cooperation, I am sure that we can look forward to a successful Conference.